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THE QUESTION BOX

The Wisconsin Historical Library has long maintained a bureau of historical information for the benefit of those who care to avail themselves of the service it offers. In "The Question Box" will be printed from time to time such queries, with the answers made to them, as possess sufficient general interest to render their publication worth while.

THE OLD CHURCH ON MADELINE ISLAND

Can you give me the date of the building of the old Roman Catholic Church on Madeline Island in Lake Superior?

My reason for asking is: There is an old church, "Caroline Church," in Setauket, that is approaching its 200th anniversary, and it is alleged to be the oldest church building in America. But my impression is that the church on Madeline Island antedates this, as I think that church was built by the Jesuits in the time of Marquette, Hennepin, and the rest of them.

HERMAN HAUPT JR.
East Setauket, Long Island

The church building on Madeline Island is incorrectly attributed to the Jesuit mission of Father Marquette. No trace of his mission on Chequamegon Bay is known, save the letters and accounts published in the *Jesuit Relations*.

The Madeline Island church was built in the early part of the nineteenth century by Father Frederick Baraga (later Bishop Baraga), an Austrian Catholic missionary to the Indians and half-breeds of the Lake Superior region.

THE NAME OF MONDOVI

Can you give me any information regarding the name of our little city, Mondovi—its origin or meaning?

MRS. R. SOUTHWORTH
Mondovi

Your request for information concerning the name Mondovi interests us, but we are not able to solve the problem of its origin. We are of opinion that the name was probably invented by some

of the earliest settlers, possibly by the first postmaster, Robert Nelson. The first postoffice was established in your town in 1859 when it was called Mondori, but this was due to a misreading of the name. In 1860 it was called Mondovia and so remained until 1863 when it assumed its present form.

Your community is not so old but what some of the early settlers may be yet living who could recall the origin of the name. If you should learn it locally, we would be glad if you would let us know, as we keep a record of place names in Wisconsin.

NAMING A MARATHON COUNTY FARM

Will you please send me information concerning the history and legends of Marathon County? We are going to name our farm, but as yet have not been able to find a suitable name, but hope we will be able to select one from the information you give.

HENRY HERMANSON
Spencer

Marathon County was in earlier days the haunt of the Chippewa Indians. Their original home was around Lake Superior, but during the eighteenth century they advanced into central Wisconsin and took possession of the great valleys of the Wisconsin, Chippewa, and St. Croix rivers. Except for Indian traders the earliest white men in Marathon County were the lumbermen, who after the treaty of 1836 began to go in increasing numbers to the upper Wisconsin. The great falls were occupied as early as 1837.

The cut-over lands were placed in market, and agricultural settlement began in the late fifties. It was nearly checked by the Civil War, but at its close began with accelerated pace, and during the seventies most of the public land was sold.

Why not name your land from some of its natural features—for its principal trees, or its outlook, or its streams? We can give you the Chippewa words for the natural features, but usually they are less pleasant than the English words. For example, Ma-na-to-kik-e-we-Se-be—Stooping-Spirit River; Skana-wong-Se-be-we-shance—the creek that runs through bluffs. The Indian word for the Eau Pleine is She-sheg-e-ma-we-she-can-Se-be (Soft Maple River).